THEORY OF DEATH

761 [100] Death distinguishes between men on one hand, women
●775 and children on the other. When they die, the former are transformed into jaguars who represent, consequently, so many reincarnated humans. The women and children, on the other hand, disappear with the wind and the storm and are not susceptible to any reappearance.

40. denõ dũrige uetnatũrina ednadure lukuĩndige ndakuĩndige monãnkiadukuĩndige denõ dũrige monãure lĩrige amonotlĩrtige toyodũrige uitendige (b1)
The woman and child who die do not change into beasts. The man who dies is changed into a jaguar, the woman who dies goes away with the tempest disappears with the storm.

262 Whence, among the Nambikwara, the only perfectly clear prohibition concerning food. Theoretically several exist, broken each time that the occasion is presented, such as those concerning the hawk, the worms from the bacaiuva nuts, and there may be added a probable repugnance concerning the meat of the veado (Cervus sp.). Chickens and dogs are never eaten, but their introduction is recent.
[224 On the other hand, the jaguar can be hunted and killed, and its re-
281 mains are highly regarded since the hide is used to make the fur
714] bonnets worn in the attire of war; but it is not eaten under any pretext:

41. [following preceding text] loukuĩndige inkara uĩrige lotsũrige ikuitãdige uĩrige (b1)
775 [the dead man] becomes a jaguar, another eats him, the jaguar carries him off, he is left to another in order to eat him.

This theory complements the information collected in the eastern group more than it differs from it. The jaguar in fact plays the same role as the atãsu, it also carries off the dying. But the central theory adds a complement. This is that the deceased is identified with the animal, who thus becomes a supernatural being. It was not possible to find out if the atãsu which one meets at night are considered to be the souls of reincarnated dead people. (1)

776 1. One recognizes in the man-eating jaguar gifted
171 with a supernatural nature a typically Tupi theme, although its present diffusion is much greater. See concerning this subject, Métraux, loc. cit., passim.

2: Levi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
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particular form of their own. Death is identified with these spirits. Men's souls are believed to be reincarnated as jaguars, whereas women's and children's souls are taken away by wind and thunder, never to return.

The highest being is the Thunder, with which any man, though usually a shaman, may have personal contact through revelations and visions. Women, however, except when very old, and children are deprived of these privileges. Women are also forbidden, under pain of death, to see the sacred flageolets (see Musical Instruments, p. 368) played at the ceremonies marking the beginning and the end of the dry season.

SHAMANISM AND MEDICINE

The shaman is sometimes distinct from—but more frequently identified with—the political chief. He is distinguished by having the privilege of polygyny, playing the leading role in ceremonial life, and possessing special supernatural powers. He treats patients by sucking out the disease or by fighting it with small ritual arrows called "thunder-arrows."

In addition to magical cures, the *Nambicuara* treat sickness with numerous medicinal plants, which are used externally or internally according to the disease. For eye infection, which is very frequent, they apply the infusion of a special bark with the help of a container made of leaves.

FOLKLORE, LORE, AND LEARNING

The only legend recorded by Lévi-Strauss (n.d. b) is a flood tale relating the destruction of human life and its re-creation through several incestuous marriages between the offspring of an old woman, who was the only being who escaped the disaster.

The only basic numbers used for counting are one and two, but the natives can reckon higher figures by combining these.

Colors are classified differently according to the dialects. The *Eastern, Central, Southern,* and *Western Nambicuara* agree in putting yellow and green in the same category, whereas the *Northern* group identify red and yellow, and class green, blue, and black together.

Some *Nambicuara* groups call stars by the same name which designates the spirits. The year is divided into two seasons and an undetermined number of lunar months. The day includes six main stages, each based on the position of the sun. Space is divided into two sections that are perpendicular to each other, one corresponding to the apparent movement of the sun and the other to the direction of the main waterways.

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Cunhabebe Roodás, 1911 and later; Lévi-Strauss, 1943 a, b; n.d. b; Roodás, 1916; Roosevelt, 1924; Roquette-Pinto, 1912 a (1935, 1938), b, c, 1917; Schmidt, 1929 b; Schuller, 1912, 1921; Souza, A. P. de, 1929; Vellard, 1939 b.

776 under the ground from where ahihdihiri, the culture hero, once released them. They add that they expect this to happen some day.

756 The man who is responsible for guarding the band against evil spirits is the shaman (wandegédiw). In this task he is assisted by the ghosts of dead shamans of his own band. The spirit or ghost of a dead shaman is known as *ewéwe* and is sharply distinguished from the ghosts of non-shamans (*apihdadiw*). The *ewéwe* of other bands, however, are considered evil for they bring thunderstorms. When speaking about shamans and shaman spirits in Portuguese, the Nambicuara refer to both as "trovão" (thunder). This has led many observers to the conclusion that the Nambicuara believe in a thunder spirit. Among the Wahihiw, at least, "trovão" or thunder is nothing more than a shaman or a shaman spirit. Actual thunder, which is caused by a shaman spirit is called *ihihi*. A shaman spirit may also enter the body of a jaguar (*yandwa*), and cause harm to people.

821 The Nambicuara do not like heavy and prolonged rainstorms, for they say that the winds blow down their houses, the lightning sometimes kills people, and the rains wash away the tracks so that they and their dogs have difficulty in following game. To pacify the evil *ewéwe*, who has caused the storm, the shaman makes a cigar-shaped bundle (*yahidewéwe*) out of certain dry leaves, which he ties with cotton twine, leaving long tails at each end. When he wants to stop the rain he lights one end of the bundle, and as it begins to smoke he waves it in the direction of the storm, telling the rain to go away. "Go away, go away, don't be angry at me," he says as he waves the bundle four times. If this does not stop the rain the shaman takes the sword club (*kalakaliw*), which appears to have magical powers, and cuts the rain. If the rain still persists, he lights three smudges made by mixing "para toda" leaves with the *yahidewéwe* leaves. When the smoke rises from the smudges he takes a burning brand and waves it against the storm telling it to stop.

756 The shamans of one band also practice sorcery 758 against individuals in another band by asking their *ewéwe* to inject objects into their bodies. When a shaman wishes to inject an object into his enemy he retires into a special hut (*silidewéwe*) and

756 by singing calls his enêwa, who eventually comes
754 up out of the ground in front of him. The enêwa may be in the form of a bird or a jaguar, but is very small in size. The shaman wears a hat made from a jaguar skin and a necklace made from jaguar claws and teeth. The shaman offers the hat and the necklace to his enêwa if he will do his bidding. If the enêwa is satisfied with the singing and the decorations he will carry out the shaman's orders. The procedure followed in curing
755 an individual who has been made ill by sorcery is much the same. The shaman calls his enêwa by singing and asks that he help him draw out the object. The enêwa enters the shaman, who then sucks out the dangerous object. In mild cases the shaman draws out bamboo slivers, but in cases of severe illness he draws out the bones of fish or the entrails of birds.

• 775 The ghosts of the dead (opôlohuêwa) who live around the stone mountain from which the Nambicuara came, periodically come to the villages and camps asking for food. They are not dangerous if they are well-treated. When the shaman says that the opôlohuêwa are around, the people prepare manioc cakes, roast ears of maize, and broil meat. They then gather around the shaman and sing together with the ghosts. The shaman thanks the ghosts for their singing and they finally go away. If the ghosts are dissatisfied with
[753] the offerings and the singing they become angry
[755] and make the children ill. To cure the children, a more elaborate feast has to be prepared for the ghosts.

775 In every case, contact with the ghosts of the
553 dead or with the spirits of dead shamans is made through singing. The Wakitîtau do not use tobacco, drums, or rattles to communicate with the supernatural. One becomes a shaman when he learns the songs of an enêwa, which he later uses whenever he wishes to contact his spirit helper. Everyone in the band appears to know the songs which bring the opôlohuêwa. Shamans practice
[534 continence before important rites, for if the
754] enêwa observe sexual intercourse they become angry and take away all the cotton from the bushes.

757 In addition to treating illness through shamanistic practices, the Nambicuara resort to more practical methods. They know herbs, the juice of which is later poured over the head or stomach of a

757 patient. The juice of a certain plant is put into the cavities of teeth to stop toothache. The juice of boiled roots and leaves are taken internally for stomach disorders. One day I observed a woman pressing her foot over her husband's forehead as he lay on the ground. The heel was placed over the eye and she exerted considerable pressure. She was doing this to cure her husband's headache. These nonmagical practices are known to everyone. Some herbal medicines, however, are known only to the shamans and are used under the directions of the seniors.

778 The sacred flutes (*udiwiu*) are associated with
534 *ohkikiñiru*, the culture hero, agriculture, and chieftainship. As these flutes are similar in appearance to the sacred flutes of the Parecí, among whom they have great significance, it is possible that the Nambicuara obtained them originally from the Parecí. The flutes are about 2 feet long with four holes at the lower end and are made from a jointless piece of bamboo. When the band settles down near their manioc fields they build a special hut for the flutes, but when they are wandering around, the flutes are hidden in the
[784] woods. Women are not permitted to see the flutes, and if one should accidently see them her stomach would swell and she would become ill. But what appears more important is the fact that the flutes poison people who do not treat them well. Yet, as only the chief and the head shamans play them this would mean that the flutes are the symbols of authority representing the men in whom power is invested. The flutes, four of which should be in every band, do not represent a spirit but appear to be more like fetishes. Boiled manioc juice is poured into them and they are offered maize and broiled meat.

241 The *udiwiu* are played after the fields have been
●775 planted and again at harvest time. After planting, the men gather into the flute hut and play
533 the flutes and sing the *ewipáwe*. The ghosts of the dead participate and, along with the flutes, are offered food and drink. At harvest time another ceremony called *hañkwañkiñáwe* is performed at night during which the flutes are played and special songs are sung. The following day the whole band participates in a dance. The ghosts also take part in this ceremony.

534 In addition to the *udiwiu* flutes, the Nambi-
cuara have a smaller four-step bamboo flute called

4: Oberg E-5 (1949)1953
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BURIAL

763 When it is seen that a person is about to die the women wail for a while and then they all turn their backs to the dying person and begin to divide up his belongings. The corpse is buried 764 in a grave dug in the village or camp site. The men loosen the soil with sticks and scoop out the soil with gourds until a roughly rectangular grave about 5 feet deep is dug. The men who lower the body into the grave take three balls of soil from the bottom of the grave with which they rub their legs and backs. A man's decorations are placed in the grave with him. In the case of a woman, two or three gourds are placed at her feet. The grave is then covered. A man's bow and arrows are broken and left on the grave. The rest of his belongings are burnt nearby and the people go on a hunt for a few days. A bit of buriti fiber is left to mark the grave of a boy, although nothing appears to be left over the grave of a woman or a girl.

● 775 The ghost remains around the grave for several days and then goes to the sacred mountain where all the ghosts live. In the land of the dead the ghosts have fine necklaces, and nose feathers, and are always painted with urucú. But they do not wish to be forgotten and want the living to give them food. The Nambicuara do not fear ghosts, and like to have them participate in their ceremonies.

764 Two days before we left Utiarity, Marciano died. He was one of our best informants, the least nervous and most helpful. A week earlier he caught cold which turned into pneumonia. It was pitiful to watch this naked man lying in the dirt beside a fire slowly gasping out his life. Once in a while he became conscious and tried to sing, calling the spirits to help him. About 9:30 that night he died. As there is something symbolic in his death and burial I would like to end this account of the Nambicuara with an entry from my diary dated July 30, 1949.

This morning we all went to the burial, the Jesuit priests, the Protestant missionaries, some of the Brazilians, and Kazuo and I. We dug a grave at an old Nambicuara camp site about a half a mile from Utiarity. As we walked along the telegraph line bearing Marciano's body the cahiá were singing and the air was full of the sweet odor of the timbó vine. Wrapped in a ragged blanket Marciano was lowered into his grave along with his

[p. 104 (2)]